

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Perla Vanessa Cardoso, I am a parent and resident from New Britain .

I stand in support of S.B. No. 284: “AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS,” with clear language that extends eligibility to all HUSKY programs to all CT residents, regardless of immigration status.

I am here to ask you to take immediate action to open up the Husky healthcare programs for all individuals regardless of their citizenship status. Growing up, I’ve seen my parents, family, and community struggle paying their healthcare bills. I know of folks in the community who get turned down by doctors because of their immigration status. With more than 130,000 estimated undocumented immigrants residing in our state, this is a massive public health concern. Early treatment effectively reduces the amount an individual will pay for healthcare in the long term by preventing health issues from developing further. Undocumented immigrants in our state pay roughly 145 million dollars into state and local taxes every year. These undocumented taxpayers are funding state healthcare programs, such as HUSKY, our CT residents use, but due to their status are unable to access any of these health programs. As taxpayers funding state health programs, undocumented residents deserve an equal and fair opportunity to access the very programs they fund.

My family has been living in Connecticut for twenty-two years still do not have health insurance. We’re in a global pandemic and my parents still do not have medical insurance. My mother worked at a plant nursery where she had an accident with her already injured knee. Shortly after that accident she was laid off. It’s been about three years since that accident and has led to her having severe arthritis. We have gone back for check ups but all they’ve given her for her pain was a knee brace, ointment, and a stack of bills to pay. Doctor’s have told her she needs a knee transplant but once we told them she has no medical insurance they stopped helping us. My father has been working as a landscaper for over twenty years. I’ve accompanied him to the ER for very gruesome injuries. Having S.B. 284 passed would mean my mom would get a new knee and my dad wouldn't have to worry about choosing to pay his medical bill or utility bill.

To summarize, I call on you today to support S.B. No 284 which will help the undocumented community: expand HUSKY for all regardless of immigrant status and income. It is your responsibility to ensure everyone has access to affordable health care. Healthcare is a

human right. Will you commit to ensuring that undocumented immigrants do not fear going to the hospital and risk economic instability all due to being uninsured and seeking medical care? This moment calls for big solutions - expanding HUSKY's eligibility to be inclusive of all immigrants regardless of status benefits the health and prosperity of everyone.

I support S.B. No 284, with clear language to extend current HUSKY eligibility rules to all CT residents, regardless of immigration status, and I ask the committee to support this legislation.

Thank you for your time,  
Perla Vanessa Cardoso